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# Graduate Lecture Recital: Amy Schumann-Griswold, violin

Amy Schumann-Griswold

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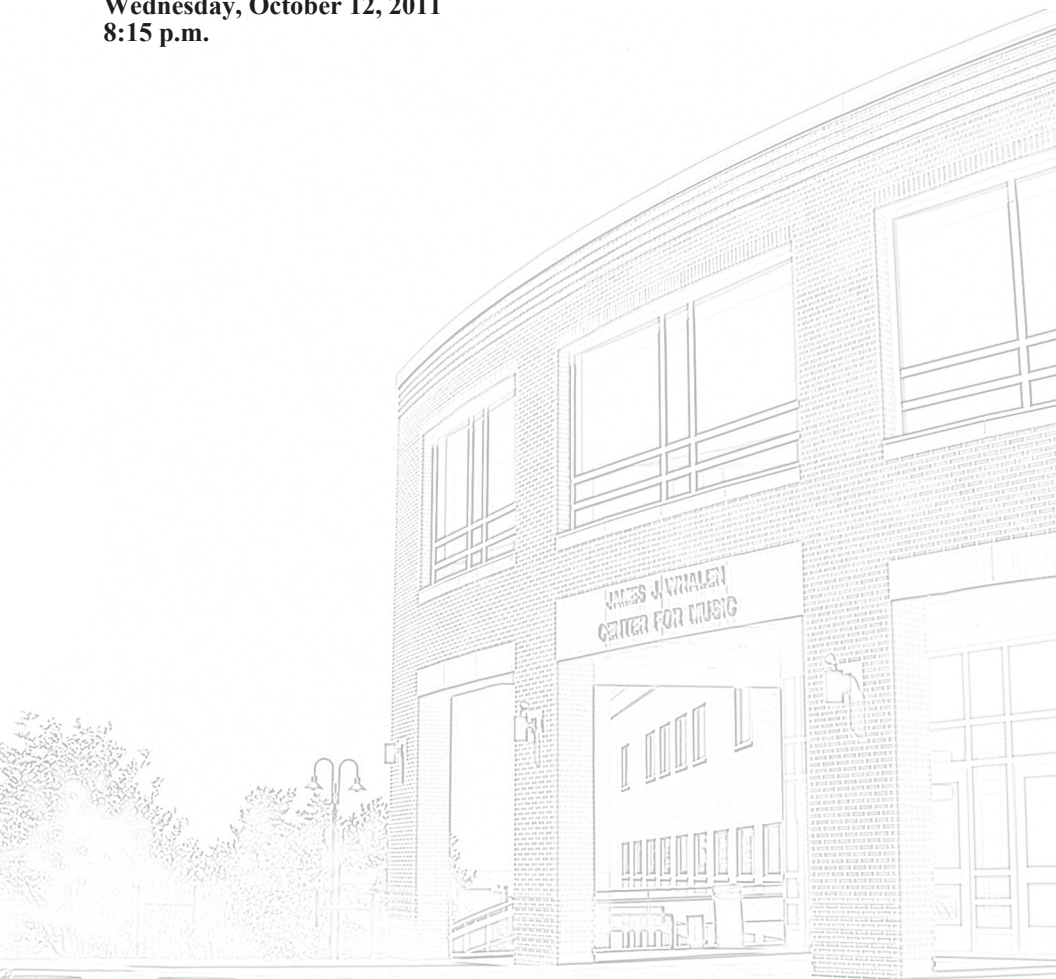
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**Lecture Recital:**  
**Amy Schumann-Griswold, violin**

**Terrance Griswold, clarinet**  
**Clera Ryu, piano**

**Nabenhauer Recital Room**  
**Wednesday, October 12, 2011**  
**8:15 p.m.**



**ITHACA COLLEGE**

**School of Music**

## **Lecture**

### **Folk Music: It's in the Form!**

An Examination of Formal Constructs in Béla Bartók's Violin Rhapsody  
No. 1 and Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano

## **Program**

Violin Rhapsody No. 1 (1929)

Prima Parte ("Lassú") [Slow]

*Assisted by Clera Ryu, Piano*

Béla Bartók  
(1881-1945)

## **Pause**

Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano (1938)

I. Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance)

II. Pihenő (Relaxation)

III. Sebes (Fast Dance)

*Assisted by Terrance Griswold, Clarinet, and Clera Ryu, Piano*

Béla Bartók

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This Graduate Recital is in partial fulfillment of the degree M.M. in Violin.  
Amy Schumann-Griswold is from the studio of Susan Waterbury.

## Notes

Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano (1938) was commissioned by the Hungarian violinist József Szigeti and the American clarinetist Benny Goodman. For a sum of \$300, Goodman requested a two-movement work for violin, clarinet and piano accompaniment that was six to eight minutes in length, the duration of time necessary to fit on a single side of a 78 rpm record.

This commission resulted in Bartók's only chamber work to include a wind instrument. Goodman and Szigeti requested a light, virtuosic showpiece in the style of Bartók's Violin Rhapsody No. 1. Following the traditional Hungarian rhapsodic model of a pair of dances in a slow-fast progression, Bartók composed the introductory Verbunkos ("recruiting dance"), which he followed with a lively, rustic fast dance titled Sebes.

Verbunkos opens with a distinctly Hungarian dotted rhythm played pizzicato by the violin. Bartók comments that the pizzicato chords in this section were meant to invoke the opening bars of Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Piano, a veiled allusion to a piece often performed by Bartók and Szigeti in their duo recitals. Many historians have noted the similarities of this opening theme to the Marica-Burletta section in the second movement of Bartók's Sixth String Quartet (1939), a piece that he composed shortly after completing Contrasts.

In the definitive Bartók Companion, Malcolm Gillies comments on Bartók's propensity, in the spirit of Beethoven, for expanding and transforming a theme: "But he manages to maintain a superb sense of unity to the music through limiting the number of his themes or motifs and ensuring that, whatever process of transformation they are subjected to, they retain their essential identity. Underlying scalar structures are liable to be expanded or contracted in whimsical ways." The pitches contained in the opening motive (B# C# D E Eb F G A B) are spun out into a ternary arch form that unifies the movement. The violin introduces the haunting, mournful second theme comprised of ninth and tenth double stops that climaxes in a raucous fortissimo section that "unravels" into a pseudo-recapitulation of the opening motive. An extended clarinet cadenza transitions into a concluding phrase nearly identical to the opening pizzicato chords played by the violin.

Bartók composed the fast dance Sebes to follow the Verbunkos. In this movement, Bartók calls on the violinist for a scordatura tuning of G#, D, A, and Eb, and uses this tri-tone relationship to imitate a peasant violinist performing in the Gypsy style. The score does not allow time for the violinist to retune his or her instrument, so it is necessary to use two violins in performance. In addition, the clarinetist also needs to switch between Bb and A clarinet in this movement. Sebes also follows a rough ternary form; the opening dance transitions into a middle section that consists of a Bulgarian additive 8 + 5 meter. The eighth notes alternate in a 3, 2, 3 + 2, 3 pattern that Bartók himself warns the pianist: "Here it is not possible to count in quavers; instead, he should keep on repeating 'm ta ta m ta m ta ta / m ta m ta ta,' and must practice the rhythm beforehand by tapping, etc., anywhere and any time, just wherever possible (it is even possible on the train!)." The contrasting

middle section abruptly switches back to the first dance, but this time Bartók presents the thematic material in an imitative, contrapuntal texture that is reminiscent of Bach. The violin erupts into a virtuosic cadenza that cascades down a chain of fifths, while maintaining the accents of the previous Bulgarian section. After this cadenza, the ensemble accelerates into a fast “Encore” finale.

Although Goodman and Szigeti requested a two-movement work, Bartók’s sense of structural unity was so strong by 1938 that he felt compelled to write a third movement titled “Pihenő,” meaning “Relaxation.” This slow second movement is an example of Bartók’s “night music,” or soundscapes meant to imitate nature at night. This movement features many mirror phrases of contrary motion between the clarinet and violin.

Goodman, Szigeti, and pianist Endre Petri gave the premiere in New York City on January 9, 1939. Although Goodman and Szigeti initially premiered the trio in its original 2-movement form, they soon decided that the “Relaxation” movement was an essential component to the trio. A second premiere, this time with Bartók playing piano, was given at Carnegie Hall on April 21, 1940. This performance included all three movements and appeared with the title *Contrasts*. Goodman, Szigeti, and Bartók recorded *Contrasts for Colombia* shortly after this performance. Bartók published *Contrasts* in 1942, dedicating the trio to Goodman and Szigeti.

Sources:

Gillies, Malcolm, ed. *The Bartók Companion*. Portland: Amadeus, 1993. Print.